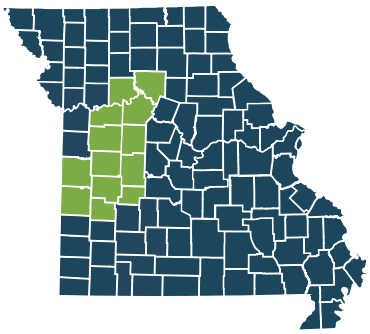


COMMUTING PROFILE
WEST CENTRAL REGION
JULY 2026

Overview

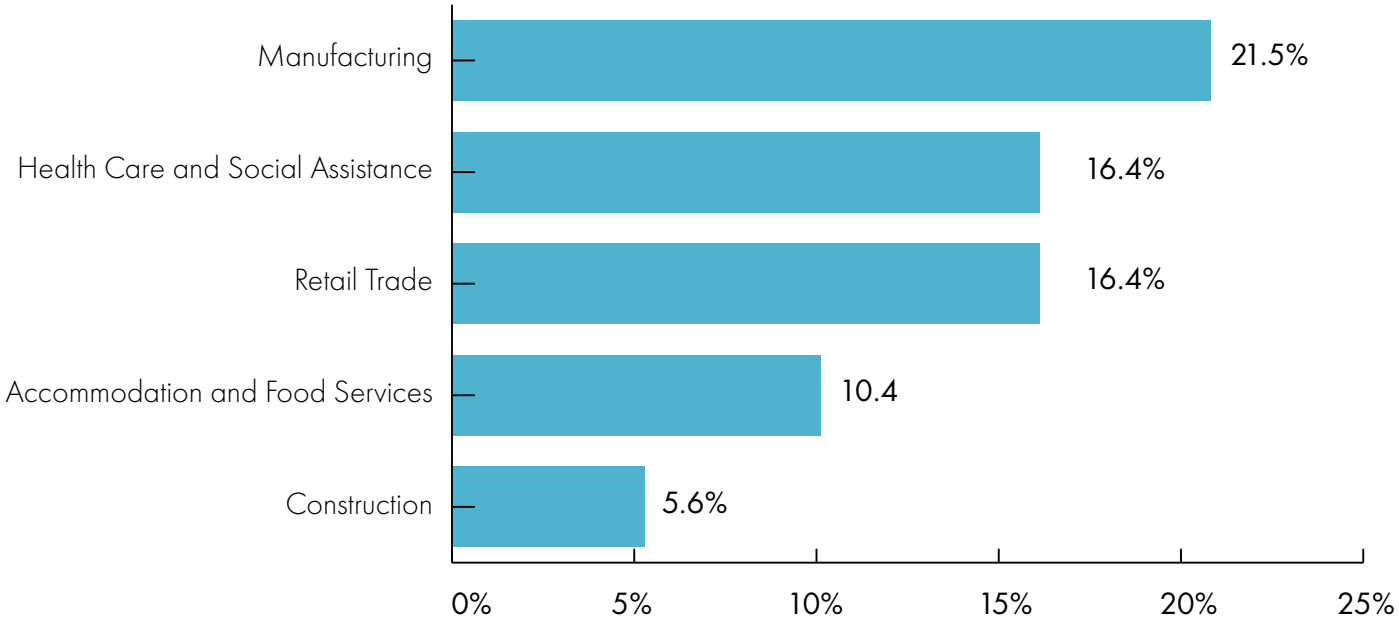
The West Central Workforce Development Area (WDA) consists of 13 counties: Bates, Benton, Carroll, Cedar, Chariton, Henry, Hickory, Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis, Saline, St. Clair, and Vernon. Sedalia, Warrensburg, and Marshall are among the largest cities in the region. In 2023, there were 61,386 total private primary jobs** in the West Central WDA, making up 2.7 percent of private primary jobs in Missouri. Nearly half (48.1%) of the workers employed in the region were aged 30 to 54. Workers aged 29 or younger were 27.5 percent of the workforce and those 55 or older were 24.5 percent. In 2023, 42.4 percent of private primary jobs in the West Central WDA paid more than $3,333 per month. Of the remaining jobs, 19.7 percent paid $1,250 per month or less and 37.8 percent paid between $1,251 and $3,333 per month. In 2023, there were more men (52.0%) than women (48.0%) in the West Central WDA workforce employed at the private primary jobs.

In 2023, 27.8 percent of employees living in the West Central WDA commuted fewer than 10 miles to work, 18.1 percent commuted 10 to 24 miles, 19.5 percent commuted 25 to 50 miles, and 34.6 percent traveled more than 50 miles to work.

Industry

Manufacturing was the largest employing industry in the region at 13,179 jobs (21.5% of total private primary jobs in the region). *Health Care and Social Assistance; Retail Trade; Accommodation and Food Services;* and *Construction* were other major industry sectors having over 5 percent of the region's employment share. Sedalia, Warrensburg, Marshall, Clinton, and Nevada were the top cities for employment in the West Central WDA.

Top West Central WDA Industry - Private Primary Jobs Percentage



Where the West Central WDA Labor Force Works and Lives

Of the 61,386 workers employed in the West Central WDA in 2023, 68.0 percent commuted to work from within the region. The remainder (32.0%) commuted into the West Central WDA from homes outside of the region.

Description	2023	
	Count	Share
West Central WDA Labor Market Size (Private Primary Jobs)		
Employed in the West Central WDA	61,386	100.0%
Living in the West Central WDA	88,240	143.7%
Net Job Inflow (+) or Outflow (-)	-26,854	-
In-Area Labor Force Efficiency (Private Primary Jobs)		
Living in the West Central WDA	88,240	100.0%
Living and Employed in the West Central WDA	41,730	47.3%
Living in the West Central WDA but Employed Outside	46,510	52.7%
In-Area Employment Efficiency (Private Primary Jobs)		
Employed in the West Central WDA	61,386	100.0%
Employed and Living in the West Central WDA	41,730	68.0%
Employed in the West Central WDA but Living Outside	19,656	32.0%

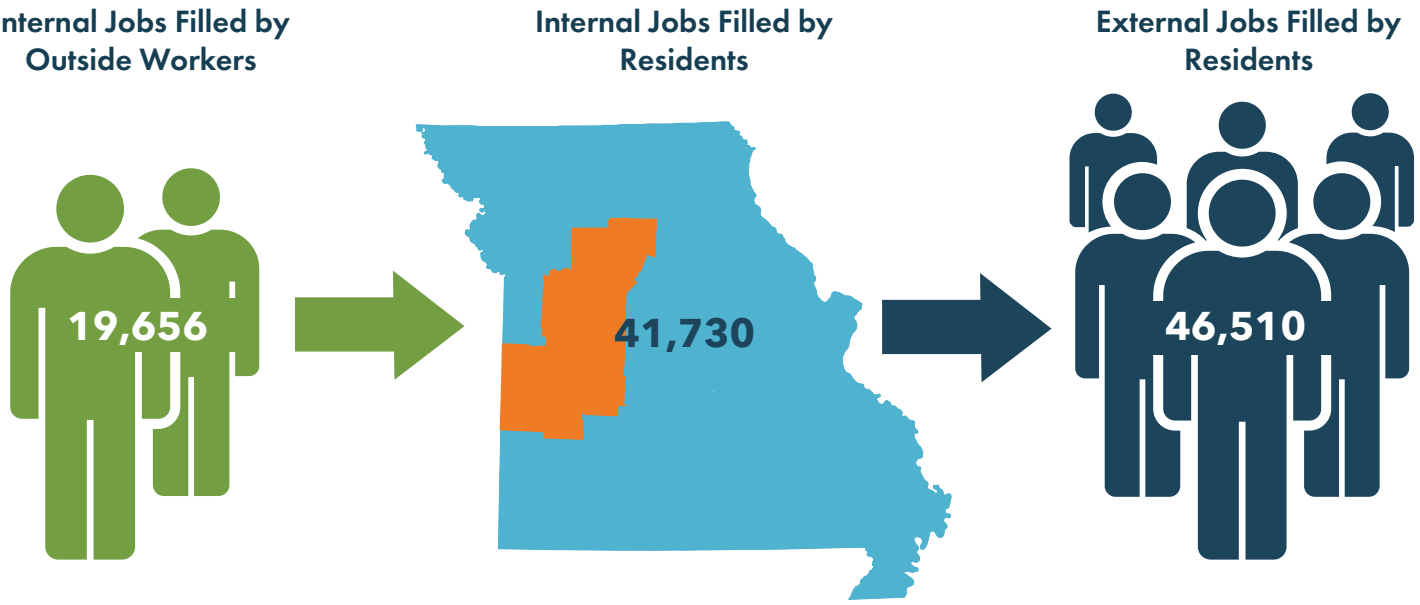
Of the region's residents who were in the workforce, 52.7 percent, or 46,510, commuted to jobs outside of the region.

The West Central WDA attracted 19,656 workers from outside of the region. More than 41,000 West Central WDA residents lived and worked in the region.

The top five Missouri counties where West Central WDA workers resided (in descending order) were Pettis, Johnson, Saline, Henry and Jackson. These counties were home to over 46 percent of the region's labor force.

Inflow/Outflow

Overall, 88,240 employees lived in the West Central WDA and 61,386 workers were employed in the region, resulting in a net outflow of 26,854 workers from the region.



The following table shows the worker composition for the job inflow and outflow groups as well as worker characteristics of the interior job flow. Of the 41,730 individuals who lived and worked in the region, 26.4 percent were aged 29 years or younger, 48.6 percent were aged 30 to 54 years, and 25.0 percent were aged 55 years or older. About 46 percent worked in the *Services* industry.

West Central WDA Description	2023	
	Count	Share
Outflow Job Characteristics (Private Primary Jobs)		
External Jobs Filled by Residents	46,510	100.0%
Workers Aged 29 or younger	12,886	27.7%
Workers Aged 30 to 54	23,002	49.5%
Workers Aged 55 or older	10,622	22.8%
Workers Earning $1,250 per month or less	7,544	16.2%
Workers Earning $1,251 to $3,333 per month	14,405	31.0%
Workers Earning More than $3,333 per month	24,561	52.8%
Workers in the "Goods Producing" Industry Class	10,381	22.3%
Workers in the "Trade, Transportation, and Utilities" Industry Class	14,401	31.0%
Workers in the "All Other Services" Industry Class	21,728	46.7%
Inflow Job Characteristics (Private Primary Jobs)		
Internal Jobs Filled by Outside Workers	19,656	100.0%
Workers Aged 29 or younger	5,842	29.7%
Workers Aged 30 to 54	9,229	47.0%
Workers Aged 55 or older	4,585	23.3%
Workers Earning $1,250 per month or less	4,202	21.4%
Workers Earning $1,251 to $3,333 per month	6,810	34.6%
Workers Earning More than $3,333 per month	8,644	44.0%
Workers in the "Goods Producing" Industry Class	4,335	22.1%
Workers in the "Trade, Transportation, and Utilities" Industry Class	6,873	35.0%
Workers in the "All Other Services" Industry Class	8,448	43.0%
Interior Flow Job Characteristics (Private Primary Jobs)		
Internal Jobs Filled by Residents	41,730	100.0%
Workers Aged 29 or younger	11,023	26.4%
Workers Aged 30 to 54	20,268	48.6%
Workers Aged 55 or older	10,439	25.0%
Workers Earning $1,250 per month or less	7,906	18.9%
Workers Earning $1,251 to $3,333 per month	16,413	39.3%
Workers Earning More than $3,333 per month	17,411	41.7%
Workers in the "Goods Producing" Industry Class	13,963	33.5%
Workers in the "Trade, Transportation, and Utilities" Industry Class	8,442	20.2%
Workers in the "All Other Services" Industry Class	19,325	46.3%

Commuter Pattern

The top five Missouri counties where West Central WDA workers living in the region are employed at their private primary jobs (in descending order) were Jackson, Pettis, Johnson, Saline, and Henry.

The table below indicates that many resident workers commuted to another county for employment. All but Pettis County had at least half of their residents commuting outside their county of residence for work. Larger cities, such as Sedalia, Warrensburg, and Marshall in Pettis, Saline, and Johnson counties, respectively, attracted workers from the surrounding counties. Interstate 70 and U.S. Highway 65 access improves the ability of West Central Region residents to commute to their workplace.

West Central WDA	
Percent of West Central WDA Residents Working Outside of Home County	
Bates	**71%**
Benton	**78%**
Carroll	**65%**
Cedar	**76%**
Chariton	**78%**
Henry	**61%**
Hickory	**80%**
Johnson	**72%**
Lafayette	**75%**
Pettis	**46%**
Saline	**53%**
St. Clair	**81%**
Vernon	**59%**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES), (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2023*), URL: https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/

**2023 is the latest year for which LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (commuting data) is available from the U.S. Census Bureau. To maintain the consistency of data in this report, all relevant data used is also from 2023, although later data for some data points was available.*

LEHD data infrastructure tracks jobs as its primary unit instead of people. As such, the system naturally captures more than one job per person when available in the data. The **dominant (or primary) job for an individual is defined as the job that earned the individual the most money. Constructed this way, ***the number of primary jobs should be equal to the number of workers.***

This report was prepared by the staff of the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC). All data in this report was current at the time of publication and is subject to revision. This workforce product was funded by a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. The product was created by the recipient and does not necessarily reflect the official position of the U.S. Department of Labor. The U.S. Department of Labor makes no guarantees, warranties, or assurances of any kind, express or implied, with respect to such information, including any information on linked sites and including, but not limited to, accuracy of the information or its completeness, timeliness, usefulness, adequacy, continued availability, or ownership. This product is copyrighted by the institution that created it. Internal use by an organization and/or personal use by an individual for non-commercial purposes is permissible. All other uses require the prior authorization of the copyright owner.